

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6585

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 07964

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EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY, ATHERTON AND SAUNDERS FROM
AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 AND 3

TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, XF, US

SUBJECT: SADAT'S LINKING OF SINAI AND PALESTINIAN

- SETTLEMENTS

REF: (A) STATE 59129, (B) CAIRO 7645, (C) LONDON 3814

SUMMARY: WHILE STRESSING THAT AT THIS TIME HE COULD MAKE NO FIRM COMMITMENT NOR PROMISE RE RELATIONSHIP OF A SINAI SETTLEMENT TO WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT, SADAT TODAY CONFIRMED THAT HIS CURRENT TENTATIVE THINKING IS THERE SHOULD BE A LINKAGE BETWEEN THE TWO. STRESSING HE WAS "THINKING OUT LOUD," HE ENVISAGED A SINAI AGREEMENT COULD BE CONCLUDED AFTER AN ACCEPTABLE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES HAD BEEN DEVELOPED. THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE SPECIFIC THAN VAGUE LANGUAGE ISRAEL WANTS AND HE THOUGHT ONLY A U.S. DRAFT WOULD SERVE THE PURPOSE. AFTER SINAI AGREEMENT CONCLUDED, IT WOULD BE INITIALED, NOT SIGNED. HE HOPED ISRAELIS WOULD BE WILLING TO BEGIN PHASED IMPLEMENTATION AFTER SINAI AGREEMENT INITIALED, ALTHOUGH FORMAL SIGNING SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT ACHIEVED. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, CONCURRENT WITH ISRAELI
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IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASED SINAI WITHDRAWAL, BEGINNING OF SOME NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL COULD TAKE PLACE TO SHOW ISRAELIS GOE IS ACTING IN GOOD FAITH. HE WAS ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS, HOWEVER, THAT LATTER IDEA OF HIS NOT BE CONVEYED TO BEGIN, WHO WOULD LIKELY LEAK IT AND CAUSE HIM EMBARRASSMENT. SADAT SAID THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY HIS LAST WORD ON THE SUBJECT AND EVERY-

THING WILL DEPEND UPON BEGIN'S ATTITUDE AND RESULTS OF UPCOMING CARTER/BEGIN TALKS. DEPENDING UPON LATTER, HE MIGHT REVIEW SITUATION AND CONSIDER WHETHER THERE ARE ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO PROCEED. END SUMMARY.

1. AS INSTRUCTED REF A, I ASKED SADAT TODAY IN FAYOUM FOR CLARIFICATION OF HIS POSITION ON WHETHER OR NOT A SINAI AGREEMENT SHOULD BE LINKED WITH PALESTINIAN SETTLEMENT. I RECALLED HIS PERTINENT STATEMENT TO ME OF SEVERAL MONTHS AGO LINKING IMPLEMENTATION OF A SINAI AGREEMENT TO SETTLEMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND FACT THAT HE HAD ALSO INCLUDED THIS CONCEPT IN THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF HIS ORAL MESSAGE TO BEGIN. I UNDERSTOOD THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD ALSO ASKED HIM ABOUT THIS IN WASHINGTON AND THAT HE MAY HAVE GIVEN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT ANSWER. I THOUGHT HE WOULD AGREE THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT PRESIDENT CARTER BE AS CLEAR AS POSSIBLE ON SADAT'S PRECISE POSITION ON THIS MATTER AND I HAD BEEN ASKED TO OBTAIN PRIOR TO THE BEGIN VISIT ANY CLARIFICATION THAT SADAT MIGHT BE ABLE OR WILLING TO PROVIDE.

2. SADAT SAID HE DID NOT RECALL EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD SAID TO THE SECRETARY IN WASHINGTON ON THIS POINT, BUT DID REMEMBER THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED LINKAGE WITH ROY ATHERTON AND ME AND HAD INCLUDED IT IN THE ORIGINAL ORAL MESSAGE TO BEGIN. AFTER REFLECTING ON THE MATTER FOR
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A FEW MINUTES, HE SAID HE COULD NOT AT THIS POINT PROVIDE A HARD AND FAST ANSWER TO THE QUESTION. HIS THINKING IS STILL EVOLVING. NOR COULD HE AT THIS JUNCTURE MAKE A FIRM COMMITMENT OR PROMISE TO US ON THIS MATTER, SINCE "EVERYTHING WILL DEPEND ON BEGIN'S ATTITUDE." HE THEN OUTLINED HIS CURRENT TENTATIVE THINKING AS FOLLOWS.

3. WHAT IS FIRST NEEDED, SADAT SAID, IS AN ACCEPTABLE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. ONLY IF THERE IS SUCH A DOCUMENT CAN HE PROCEED WITH NEGOTIATING A SINAI SETTLEMENT. AN ACCEPTABLE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WILL "RELIEVE ME OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES RESULTING FROM ARAB SUMMIT DECISIONS" AND WILL REQUIRE THE OTHER ARAB LEADERS AND THE PALESTINIANS TO SIT DOWN AND NEGOTIATE THEIR OWN DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS WITH ISRAEL. IN ORDER TO SERVE THIS PURPOSE, SADAT CONTINUED, THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES MUST BE BASED ON (A) WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH U.N. RESOLUTION 242, BUT BE MORE SPECIFIC THAN RESOLUTION 242, AND (B) AN EXPRESSED READINESS TO SOLVE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. ANYTHING LESS THAN THIS WOULD NOT "COVER MY MANEUVER." IF THE DECLARATION IS CAST IN THE VAGUE WAY

THAT ISRAEL WANTS, IT WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATING A SINAI ARRANGEMENT. IT WOULD GIVE CARDS TO THE SOVIETS AND HIS CRITICS IN THE ARAB WORLD. THE PRESENT DRAFT DECLARATION, AS IT IS EVOLVING, SADAT SAID, WILL NOT SERVE THE PURPOSE. HE IS COUNTING UPON THE U.S. TO PUT FORWARD AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME A DRAFT OF ITS OWN, WHICH HE HOPES WILL CONTAIN THE TYPE OF SPECIFIC LANGUAGE THAT HE BELIEVES HE NEEDS. IN ANSWER TO MY QUERY, HE REAFFIRMED THAT THE ASWAN LANGUAGE ON THE

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PALESTINIANS IS AGREEABLE TO HIM.

4. IF AN ACCEPTABLE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES DEVELOPS, SADAT WENT ON, HE COULD THEN PROCEED TO NEGOTIATE THE DETAILS OF A SINAI AGREEMENT. TO TRY TO CONCLUDE A SINAI AGREEMENT WITHOUT A SPECIFIC DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE TYPE SUGGESTED, HE EMPHASIZED, WOULD ENDANGER HIS POSITION IN ARAB WORLD. ONCE THE DETAILS OF A SINAI SETTLEMENT ARE WORKED OUT, HE WOULD INITIAL, NOT RPT NOT SIGN, THE DOCUMENT. SIGNING, IN HIS PRESENT VIEW, SHOULD NOT RPT NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL THERE IS AGREEMENT ON A WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT. IF HUSSEIN OR THE PALESTINIANS REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE WITH ISRAEL, AND HERE SADAT INTERJECTED HE HAS NO USE FOR HUSEIN WHO HE CHARGED IS TRYING TO PLAY THE "EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN CARD," HE, SADAT, WOULD BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN GAZA, WHERE EGYPT HAS HAD A POSITION IN THE PAST. MOREOVER, IF HUSEIN AND THE PALESTINIANS DO NOT SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY AND IF BEGIN WERE WILLING TO DO IT, HE, SADAT, WOULD EVEN BE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK.

5. ONCE A SINAI AGREEMENT IS INITIALED, SADAT HOPED THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL BE WILLING TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION OF IT EVEN THOUGH IT HAS NOT YET BEEN SIGNED AND WILL NOT BE SECRET

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FORMALLY SIGNED UNTIL A WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT IS ACHIEVED. THIS IMPLEMENTATION SHOULD TAKE THE FORM OF PHASED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI. TO SHOW THE ISRAELIS THAT GOE IS ACTING IN GOOD FAITH, DESPITE NON-SIGNING, SADAT IS THINKING THAT SUCH IMPLEMENTATION MIGHT BE ACCOMPANIED BY BEGINNING SOME SORT OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. IN TELLING ME THIS, SADAT SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT THIS LAST IDEA OF HIS NOT RPT NOT BE CONVEYED TO BEGIN. IT WAS FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE ONLY. BEGIN SHOULD BE GIVEN NO HINT OF SADAT'S THINKING ABOUT BEGINNING NORMALIZATION ONCE A SINAI AGREEMENT IS INITIALED AND IMPLEMENTATION BEGINS, SINCE PRIMIN BEGIN IS BOUND TO LEAK IT AND THEREBY UNDERMINE SADAT'S POSITION IN ARAB WORLD AND EXPOSE HIM TO FURTHER SOVIET AND RADICAL ARAB CRITICISM.

6. IN PROVIDING THE ABOVE, SADAT STRESSED THAT HE WAS "THINKING OUT LOUD." WITHOUT CLEARER KNOWLEDGE OF BEGIN'S ATTITUDES AND WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER MAY BE ABLE TO DO WITH BEGIN ON UPCOMING VISIT, HE COULD NOT AT THIS POINT IN TIME BE PRECISE ON THE ISSUE. HE ALSO SAID THAT WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS HIS LAST WORD. DEPEND-ING UPON THE CARTER/BEGIN TALKS AND HOW THE SITUATION EVOLVES, HE MIGHT REVIEW THE SITUATION AND CONSIDER WHETHER THERE ARE OTHER ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO PROCEED. EILTS

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